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Official Records

124th plenary meeting
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New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral . . . . . (Portugal)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Kittikhoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Agenda item 65 *(continued)*

Comprehensive test-ban treaty

Draft resolution (A/50/L.78)

Letter from the Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations (A/50/1027)

Mr. Zahran (Egypt) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: The Egyptian delegation would like to thank the Australian delegation for its initiative to convene this meeting of the resumed session of the fiftieth General Assembly, another indication of Australia's policy to contribute positively to the international efforts aiming at nuclear disarmament, the latest of which was the report of the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

The Egyptian delegation regrets that, despite its efforts since chairing the group on legal and institutional matters in the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban of the Conference on Disarmament, no consensus was reached this year in the Conference on the comprehensive test-ban treaty (CTBT) draft text contained in document A/50/1027. We believe that if more time had been allowed for the negotiations to continue it would have been possible for the Conference on Disarmament to reach agreement on some of the controversial issues in the draft text before the General Assembly.

The Egyptian delegation also regrets that no consensus was reached in the Conference on Disarmament to transmit the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban, contained in document CD/1425 of 16 August 1996, to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session, pursuant to resolution 50/65. All Member States could have benefited from that report, as it contains the developments and results of the negotiations on the provisions of the treaty, in addition to the national positions of various members of the Conference on Disarmament on those provisions. The Ad Hoc Committee's report also acquires special importance as it contains the statement of the Chairman of the Committee, in which he presented his interpretation of some provisions relating to the abuse of national technical means and entry into force.

Egypt's support for the draft resolution contained in document A/50/L.78, which calls for the adoption of the draft CTBT text, is based on the fact that it contains positive aspects, which could be considered as a step — albeit limited — towards nuclear disarmament on a global level. This flexible and positive position should not be interpreted as indicating Egypt's full satisfaction with the text, which has several shortcomings.

In the first place, the draft does not include a commitment placing it in an identifiable framework for

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nuclear disarmament. We made every effort to include in the provisions of the treaty a clear commitment to achieving total nuclear disarmament, and we consider it to be an important step in a progressive framework for nuclear disarmament regionally and worldwide. It is a programme that aims at achieving total nuclear non-proliferation both horizontally and regionally, and nuclear disarmament, by capping any further qualitative development of nuclear weapons according to the Decision on Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament adopted by the NPT Review and Extension Conference in 1995.

Since then, in April 1996, the Pelindaba Treaty was signed in Cairo with the aim of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa. The non-proliferation system should be completed at the regional and global levels by expediting the process of, and giving priority to, establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, as a prelude to ridding the area of all weapons of mass destruction, following the initiative of President Mubarak of Egypt.

As coordinator of the Group of 21, and on behalf of 28 members of the Conference on Disarmament that are members of the Group of 21, Egypt submitted a proposal for a programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons, as contained in document CD/1419 of 7 August 1996. Egypt believes that the purpose of this programme of work is to compensate for the lack of commitment on nuclear disarmament in the draft text of the CTBT. We hope that this programme will be seriously studied in the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban, the establishment of which we, with the Group of 21, called for. It should also be taken into consideration during the fifty-first session of the General Assembly as a follow-up to resolution 50/70 P and, not least, in the 1997 review process on the NPT.

I would also like to refer to the report of the Canberra Commission issued in August 1996, the central message of which is that the doctrine of nuclear deterrence is militarily redundant and dangerous. We are looking forward to studying that report in detail, and I am sure that it, and the programme of action of the Group of 21, will contribute to international efforts aimed at eliminating nuclear weapons.

Those two contributions were made one month after the unanimous Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice was issued on 8 July 1996, which recognized that

> "There exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control".

This should be implemented in the context of the future programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament, as that body is the sole multilateral negotiating forum dealing with disarmament.

I would like to pay tribute to the decision of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities of the Commission on Human Rights, in adopting resolution 1996/14 on 23 August 1996. The resolution

> "Affirms that weapons of mass destruction and in particular nuclear weapons should have no role to play in international relations and thus should be eliminated;"

and

> "Recommends that the relevant international forums, in particular the Conference on Disarmament, should immediately start negotiations on nuclear disarmament to reduce nuclear weapons globally within a phased programme, with the ultimate goal of eliminating those weapons, thus contributing to the enhancement of international peace and security and the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms and above all the right to life". *(E/CN.4/Sub.2/1996/L.11/Add.1, resolution 1996/14, paras. 1 and 2)*

We believe that the scope of the basic obligations of article I of the CTBT draft contradicts the actual title of the treaty, which refers to a comprehensive nuclear-test ban. Egypt's amendment to this provision, which would have ensured that the ban covered all nuclear-weapons tests, was, regrettably opposed by the majority of nuclear-weapon States, while the majority of non-nuclear-weapon States supported it. As a result, the text submitted to the General Assembly paradoxically does not ban all nuclear testing, but is restricted to explosive testing only. We therefore have before us yet another partial nuclear-test-ban treaty, not a comprehensive one. Other kinds of non-explosive nuclear tests remain unprohibited and could be used to improve nuclear arsenals through the development of new generations of nuclear

weapons. We believe that this contradicts the ultimate objective agreed upon in the NPT Review and Extension Conference Decision on Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, adopted in May 1995.

On the important matter of on-site inspections, the Egyptian delegation is of the view that these should, once requested by a State Party, proceed in the smoothest possible manner and be halted only if it is demonstrated that the request is baseless. Therefore, the "green light" approach endorsed in the draft treaty does not serve, in our view, the best interests of the international community to ensure full compliance with the provisions of the treaty, since the relevant decisions of the Executive Council require 30 votes. This could impede the on-site inspection, and therefore it will not be possible to verify the full compliance with the provisions of the Treaty.

The use of national technical means also represents a matter of misunderstanding. We agree that such means should have their place in the treaty and can be useful as a complement to the International Monitoring System, with the necessary guarantees needed to avoid the potential abuse or selective and partial use of national technical means. However, we consider that the interpretation of these means by the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban in his statement delivered before the Committee on 9 August 1996 would provide additional assurances against the misuse or abuse of national technical means.

The Chairman's statement of 9 August 1996 contained also an understanding by the Chairman whereby it was noted that article XIV, paragraph 2, of the draft treaty regarding the "Entry into Force" did not refer to United Nations Security Council punitive and coercive measures under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. It is worthwhile to note here that Egypt has undertaken in the last stage of negotiations sincere efforts in order to reach a compromise text to article XIV; however, its efforts were not crowned with success.

Egypt regrets that the composition of the Executive Council, as reflected in the current text, does not reserve equitable and balanced treatment for African countries. On numerous occasions during the negotiations Egypt, together with others, expressed concern over the limited number of Executive Council seats reserved for Africa, which is, as compared to other regional groups, underrepresented. Those concerns have been ignored, as have those concerning the unprecedented regional group system that has found its way into the CTBT draft text and which divides the world into six regional groups, rather than the five we are accustomed to in the United Nations system. Setting such precedents despite serious opposition may affect the credibility of the treaty and limit its chances of achieving universality. In addition, the decision-making in the Executive Council — two-thirds majority for matters of substance — may also paralyse it in comparison with the similar body in the Chemical Weapons Convention.

These are some of the major preoccupations of the delegation of Egypt with regard to the draft treaty before us. Consequently, we cannot subscribe to the adoption of the draft text. However, Egypt supports the draft resolution contained in document A/50/L.78 calling for the adoption of the CTBT, in view of the fact that Egypt is convinced that the legal system banning nuclear tests should be completed in order to save humanity and to protect the environment. This treaty is a step towards nuclear disarmament, and it should be followed by several serious steps on the road to the elimination of nuclear weapons within an agreed time-frame.

Mr. Mapuranga (Zimbabwe): The Government of Zimbabwe has over the years supported, in various forums, initiatives aimed at reducing and eventually resolving conflict situations as well as eradicating confrontations throughout the world. Our commitment to world peace has been clearly demonstrated by our active participation in, and support for, the various and numerous resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly aimed at the maintenance of international peace and security.

On the eve of the twenty-first century, efforts to achieve lasting international peace and security have centred not only on general and complete disarmament, but also on the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The ongoing negotiations on the establishment of more nuclear-weapon-free zones — and Africa is one of them, on the basis of the Pelindaba Treaty — is testimony to the aspirations of the international community for a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The General Assembly mandated the Conference on Disarmament, which reaches its decisions by consensus, to undertake and conclude negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, which would subsequently be endorsed by the General Assembly.

On 20 August, the Conference on Disarmament adopted the report of its Ad Hoc Committee, which concluded that no consensus had been achieved on the draft text of the comprehensive test-ban treaty (CTBT). Thus, under normal circumstances and in accordance with the spirit of consensus, which is the decision-making mechanism in the Conference on Disarmament deliberations, the CTBT draft was supposed to have been renegotiated and the concerns of those members of the Conference on Disarmament who had voiced reservations on the text addressed.

We are faced today with a situation where a CTBT draft text that did not enjoy consensus is being hurriedly submitted to the General Assembly for consideration.

We would like to point out that it is procedurally wrong to bring the current draft of the CTBT to the General Assembly before consensus is achieved in the body that was mandated by the General Assembly itself to negotiate the treaty and come up with a consensus text. Arguments have been advanced that this was due to *force majeure*, and we would strongly counsel that this procedural anomaly should not be allowed to constitute a precedent for our future *modus operandi*.

As for the text of the draft comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty (CTBT) before the Assembly, we would like to note that it fails to address the central issue of the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons in a time-bound framework. In that regard, my country fully supported the proposals alluded to by previous speakers which were made in Geneva on 7 August 1996 by 28 member States of the Conference on Disarmament for a programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons. Those proposals are contained in document CD/1419 of 7 August 1996 of the Conference on Disarmament.

Previous speakers have also alluded to the epoch-making Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice of 8 July 1996, which concluded that on the part of all States

> "There exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control."

The good faith called for is not reflected in the draft treaty before us, and its contents do not reflect the wide scope of its title. This is not a comprehensive test-ban treaty, since it bans only nuclear-weapons-test explosions, leaving other forms of testing uncovered. The term "comprehensive" should be understood to mean all forms of testing of nuclear weapons.

Thus, the upshot of the treaty would be to allow the most technologically sophisticated nuclear-weapon States to continue to improve their arsenals. It is understandable that some nuclear-weapons-threshold States find this unsatisfactory, for it blocks their advancement into the nuclear club — yet it does not dissolve the club, but makes it even more exclusive.

Zimbabwe thus found it difficult to co-sponsor such a flawed treaty. My delegation will not, however, vote against the draft CTBT because, for all its imperfections, the banning of test explosions would rid the world of the hazard of nuclear fallout, which is a grave menace to humanity and the environment. My country will therefore vote for this draft treaty.

I wish to conclude by urging all of us to continue to work for a genuinely comprehensive test-ban treaty, for the elimination of the present stocks of nuclear weapons and for a world free of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Few times in modern history, and particularly since the start of what has come to be called the nuclear age, has there been an issue that has been so insistently and repeatedly pressed by the international community as the suspension and prohibition of nuclear-weapons testing.

There has been no shortage of initiatives and proposals, but we have always come up against the lack of political will on the part of certain nuclear Powers, which has delayed the attainment of this objective for more than 30 years.

In 1963 the international community welcomed with satisfaction and hope the negotiation efforts between certain countries with the goal of banning nuclear tests. Regrettably, that effort was but an inconclusive exercise that allowed only for the adoption of a partial Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water. Those were precisely the tests that the research and scientific developments of the nuclear Powers had rendered unnecessary.

In other words, despite the call by the majority of the international community for a total and complete ban on tests, the military appetites and strategic nuclear

doctrines of certain countries encouraged the continued improvement and massive stock-piling of nuclear weapons. That gave rise to the situation we face today, where the vertical proliferation of such weapons has meant that there still exists today the latent threat of the total nuclear annihilation of mankind.

During all these years, countless resolutions have been adopted by the United Nations calling for, demanding and urging an end to nuclear-weapons testing through a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

There is no need to go back to the records of past sessions of the General Assembly to observe repeatedly why it was not possible to achieve agreement on a nuclear-test ban and who was responsible for the growth of nuclear arsenals and the continued tests of those weapons.

Cuba's position has been clear and transparent. Our people and Government, today as in the past, demand the elimination and destruction of nuclear weapons. In this process, nuclear-weapons tests of all types should be suspended and should be the object of a total and complete prohibition.

This aspiration has been repeatedly shared and advocated by many countries, and mainly by the Non-Aligned Movement, which since its establishment has demanded a ban on nuclear-weapons testing and nuclear disarmament as absolute priorities. This was endorsed by the Eleventh summit Conference of the Movement, held in Cartagena, Colombia, where the Heads of State and Government rejected all types of nuclear tests as inimical to the objectives of peace and international security and stability. They welcomed efforts to conclude negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty in 1996 and declared that in order for it to be meaningful as a disarmament treaty it should be considered as an important step on the path towards the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons within a specific time-frame.

In keeping with its position in favour of the total elimination of nuclear testing, Cuba contributed to the intensive efforts made during the past two and a half years within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament. It was under Cuba's presidency that the Conference on Disarmament reached agreement on a negotiating mandate in this connection.

Cuba deeply regrets that the committee negotiating the treaty was unable to produce a consensus draft document because of the intransigence of certain nuclear Powers that did not allow the draft treaty to be given its true dimension and scope. Those Powers did not agree to commit themselves to the achievement of nuclear disarmament in an agreed time-frame, nor did they show that they were prepared to guarantee that they would not continue the qualitative development of nuclear arms.

The negotiating committee ended its work hastily, a fact not unrelated to the domestic aspirations of certain countries engaged in the electoral process.

The draft treaty before us today for adoption, in the judgement of our delegation, is not a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, as we would have preferred. Instead, it limits itself to being a treaty on the prohibition of nuclear explosions, as other speakers have said repeatedly.

The treaty before us for consideration could have been a major step on the road to nuclear disarmament. But, by not banning tests under laboratory conditions, it allows the nuclear Powers to continue developing and improving their nuclear weapons. It is for that reason an additional non-proliferation treaty. Cuba has no difficulty with the concept of non-proliferation when it is applied in a non-selective fashion, which is not the case here.

This was not the treaty that Cuba was seeking as the outcome of the negotiating effort. However, we believe that even though the treaty is tentative and partial in substance and procedurally contradictory and anomalous, it is nonetheless a step towards the ultimate goal of a total and comprehensive ban on all types of nuclear tests.

My delegation would have preferred the negotiating effort in Geneva to continue, and that an additional attempt be made to achieve the true objective. This would have made it possible to submit to the General Assembly a draft treaty that enjoyed universal acceptance.

We respect the right of every State Member of this Organization to submit to it those initiatives that it considers appropriate. But we are concerned, as has been said here, about weakening the procedures established and accepted by all for the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

The credibility of the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament has been seriously damaged. Even the trust that we have all placed in that forum could be shaken.

We have before us a serious challenge, which, in our opinion, can be met only by heeding the appeal made in the declaration of the Group of 21 of the Conference on Disarmament for the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. This committee would consider the proposal made by that group of countries for a programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons, with specific stages towards this objective.

We cannot overlook the recent Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice, which, *inter alia*, recognized that there exists an obligation to pursue and conclude in good faith negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

Regardless of the final stand that our country will be taking in due course with respect to the treaty, following the appropriate consideration and legal procedures, and without prejudging the way we will act in this respect, Cuba will not oppose the adoption of the draft before us, given its importance and the legitimate interests of us all in our stance against nuclear weapons. However, in the light of the considerations expressed earlier, my delegation will abstain in the vote on the draft before us, convinced as we are that it is possible to make a further effort to achieve a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty that would put an end to the qualitative development of nuclear weapons, and in the hope that the treaty that is adopted today will represent a first step in this direction.

Mr. Hasan (Iraq) (*interpretation from Arabic*): This resumed session of the General Assembly represents a milestone in the efforts of the international community towards complete and comprehensive disarmament. For 40 years the world has awaited the conclusion of the comprehensive test-ban treaty (CTBT), which we hope will not be the end of the road for nuclear disarmament.

The question that arises on this occasion is whether the treaty meets expectations. If this is not the case, then where are its shortcomings? How can we overcome them and achieve the goal referred to in paragraph 4 of the preamble to the treaty — the elimination of nuclear weapons?

It is quite clear that this treaty has not lived up to all expectations and that it has many shortcomings, including the fact that its framework does not cover all nuclear tests. It does not prevent laboratory-condition nuclear tests or the resulting effects of the qualitative improvement of nuclear arsenals and the increase in vertical proliferation. It does not refer to a clear-cut commitment to continue efforts towards complete and comprehensive disarmament in a set time-frame.

This is in addition to the procedural deficiencies that might hamper the entry into force of the treaty, and to the technical shortcomings that have raised fears that some of the procedures specified by the treaty might jeopardize the sovereignty of Member States and their right to maintain their key installations and prevent the disclosure of confidential data and information unrelated to the treaty. This is particularly true since previous tests proved the presence of such dangers. These shortcomings, and others, do not, however, negate the importance of the treaty as a step towards the loftier hope represented by nuclear disarmament.

Perhaps the countries located in hotbeds of tension — one of which possesses nuclear weapons — realize quite clearly the importance of any step towards nuclear disarmament. It is important not only to have an excellent text, but also for the Member State in question to demonstrate the political will to apply the text faithfully. Therefore, the adoption of the treaty by the General Assembly will be a first step in making it a tangible reality guiding the conduct of States — particularly the responsibility of nuclear-weapon States for the elaboration of a credible, comprehensive multilateral programme for nuclear disarmament — so that this treaty will represent a step towards our goal and not an end in itself.

The lack of a time-bound framework for nuclear disarmament in the foreseeable future and the absence of a firm commitment to non-nuclear States not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons will encourage the belief of many — as we saw last year in the course of the Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) — that certain nuclear-weapon States tend towards nuclear exclusivity. That will definitely weaken the credibility of this treaty.

For its part, the international community and its relevant institutions are duty-bound to seek the universality of international treaties in the field of disarmament and their faithful implementation by all parties. Uneven implementation should not offer advantages to some at the expense of others.

Whoever believes that the world today is less vulnerable than it once was to the dangers of nuclear

annihilation is dead wrong. Policies of nuclear deterrence remain current. By the same token, the power of force and the tyranny of military supremacy still rule the decision-making centres of some Member States. Day in and day out, we witness the reckless exploitation of military technical advantages in the launching of long-range cruise missiles with the aim of blackmailing States and interfering in their internal affairs. This bitter reality makes it deeply incumbent on the international community to pursue its endeavours to rid humanity of nuclear weapons and to ensure that the treaty under discussion, despite its shortcomings, becomes one step in that direction.

Mr. Shah (Nepal): A total nuclear test ban has been the elusive goal of the United Nations for over 40 years. We achieved a partial test ban 33 years ago. Since that time, a comprehensive test ban has remained one of the highest priority objectives of the United Nations in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Nepal has for decades been a strong advocate of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty and we were happy that, two years ago, the General Assembly mandated the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate a multilateral comprehensive test-ban treaty. Thereafter, progress in this respect has been steady. The Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament adopted in May 1995 by the Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons set this year, 1996, as the deadline for the conclusion of the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. General Assembly resolution 50/65, which was adopted without a vote in December last year, also set a time-bound programme. It called upon the Conference on Disarmament to conclude, as a task of the highest priority, a universal and multilaterally verifiable comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty which contributes to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects, so as to enable its signature by the outset of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly.

In the belief that the achievement of this goal at this session will represent a most significant decision of the international community on the issue of nuclear disarmament, my delegation will support the draft resolution contained in document A/50/L.78, which would have the General Assembly adopt the text of the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty circulated in document A/50/1027. We also believe that the proposed treaty is an essential step towards the fulfilment of the commitment undertaken by the nuclear-weapon Powers in article VI of the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to the cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament.

We want to hold the nuclear-weapon Powers to their solemn pledge. However, a CTBT in its present form does not fulfil our cherished goal: a world free of nuclear weapons. I want to reiterate Nepal's long-standing position that the international community, the Conference on Disarmament in particular, should pursue time-bound nuclear disarmament targets; we would have welcomed these targets included in the text of the draft treaty. We would like to urge the members of the Conference on Disarmament, especially the nuclear-weapon Powers, seriously to consider in future negotiations the programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons jointly submitted by 28 non-aligned and neutral States members of the Conference on Disarmament.

We believe that such a course of action is possible. We would also like to point out that their good-faith treaty undertaking under the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty will represent a compelling obligation on the part of the nuclear-weapon Powers to see to it that the proposed treaty becomes a truly comprehensive test-ban-treaty prohibiting all kinds of tests, not just explosive tests.

Mr. Slade (Samoa): Samoa is very grateful to Australia for the initiative taken and for introducing the draft resolution now before the Assembly.

My Government is a co-sponsor of the draft resolution; it is one of the 16 South Pacific Forum Governments which, five days ago — and consistent with their long-standing position — declared in no uncertain terms their strong and full support for the adoption at this General Assembly session of the comprehensive test-ban treaty (CTBT). I have the honour here to restate and to reemphasize that support.

For decades now, Governments and citizens alike have laboured to end the nuclear arms race and to eliminate nuclear weapons. We believe that the conclusion and adoption of a truly comprehensive test-ban treaty is vital to these efforts. Last year at their Review and Extension Conference, the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) called for a CTBT not later than 1996 and, at its fiftieth session, the General Assembly also called for a CTBT to be ready for signature by the outset of its fifty-first session. The clear demand of Member Governments — indeed, of the international community — is for a CTBT

that is comprehensive and provides for verification of compliance.

We share completely the view that, given the state of the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament, the text of the treaty now before the Assembly offers possibly the only chance to meet this schedule and the requirement for an early and verifiable CTBT.

We all know that to this day well over 2,000 nuclear-weapon tests have been carried out. That means that for more than 50 years there has been a nuclear explosion almost every nine days. That is an appalling statistic; certainly it cannot be a record any of us can be proud of. Too many — far too many — of those tests took place in our region in the Pacific.

The Assembly will then understand the anxiety of my own Government that the moment — surely a historic moment — be firmly seized. From our perspective, the failure to conclude a CTBT bears with it every possibility of the resumption of testing.

We understand, of course, that stopping nuclear testing will not eliminate nuclear weapons. We certainly recognize the shortcomings in the text. But a failure to conclude a CTBT now will only prolong the danger and threat of nuclear weaponry. The CTBT is the first turn in a long and undoubtedly difficult journey towards eliminating nuclear weapons for ever. Thereafter, much more will remain for us all to undertake. The most obvious steps to be taken have been identified in last year's Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Review and Extension Conference and in the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the question of the illegality of nuclear weapons, as well as in such important studies as the recently completed Canberra Commission report.

For the moment we should acknowledge the importance of the affirmation in the text before us from those countries with nuclear weapons that they are willing to undertake specific additional measures to halt the improvement and development of their nuclear weapons and thereby make further progress in the process towards nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Zlenko (Ukraine): For several decades the international community has been seeking a comprehensive treaty mechanism to ban all nuclear tests. In the past, more than 2,050 nuclear explosions have been conducted. That is too many. In many countries public opinion has been alarmed by the nuclear-weapon tests carried out by some States and considers them to be very hazardous to the health of people and seriously damaging to the environment.

We cannot but note with satisfaction, therefore, that such a mechanism — a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty — which all five nuclear-weapon States have expressed their political will to be committed to, is almost completed.

Today, with the adoption of the draft resolution, initiated by Australia and sponsored by more than two-thirds of the Member States, including my country, the world will move one step closer to its long-aspired goal — to free our planet from the burden of nuclear arms.

The withdrawal of the last strategic nuclear warhead from the territory of Ukraine on 1 June 1996 demonstrated Ukraine's commitment to the concept of universal nuclear disarmament and its desire to take practical steps which would bring mankind closer to an era in which all the peoples of our planet will be able to live without the threat of nuclear annihilation. In spite of the relatively short period of its independence as a State, Ukraine has thus made a substantial contribution to the reduction of the nuclear threat and the creation of a safer world.

Ukraine is objectively interested in further continuing and deepening nuclear arms reductions. Within this context we consider the conclusion of the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty to be an extremely important element of the whole process of terminating the nuclear arms race.

We believe that the text of the draft treaty represents a sound compromise that takes into account the positions expressed by different parties to the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament, thereby striking a realistic balance between desirable and currently attainable objectives.

Ukraine has taken the important decision to sign the treaty as soon as it is opened for signature and to start the internal ratification process as a matter of exceptional foreign policy priority. A definitively positive message on the comprehensive test-ban treaty from New York is impatiently awaited by too many in the world, and we cannot allow these hopes to be frustrated. Let us act now.

Mr. Moher (Canada): It is a great pleasure for Canada to be participating in this resumed fiftieth session of the General Assembly. I wish briefly to state why it is such a great pleasure.

For approximately 40 years Canada has been a strong advocate of measures to advance nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. This position has been consistently put forward and actively pursued wherever and whenever possible, whether in the negotiation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, in support of the Partial Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty during the 1960s, in support of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) process in the 1970s, or in our strong endorsement of the current Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) process. That policy position defined our approach to the 1995 Review and Extension process for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Canada, while particularly pleased with the 1995 decision to extend the NPT indefinitely, also strongly endorsed the Decision on Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament which emerged from that Conference. For Canada those Principles and Objectives reflect a clear commitment to move forward in as progressive and dynamic a manner as possible to advance these two shared objectives — nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

It is in that context that Canada fully endorses the text of the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty contained in document A/50/1027. Canada, as an active participant in the intensive negotiations over the past two years — and certainly during the past six months — has concluded that that text reflects the best achievable at this time. This conclusion is a concrete demonstration of Canada's approach to these matters as stated earlier: to seize every possible opportunity to move forward whenever and wherever possible as we advance towards the goal of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. The bottom line of this treaty is that it will prohibit any nuclear-weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion; that it will do so in a multilaterally verifiable way; and — as it states in the preamble — that it will constrain

> "the development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and [end] the development of advanced new types of nuclear weapons". (*A/50/1027, p.6*)

In our considered view, this is a valid, valuable and vital measure of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. The signature and ratification of this treaty in the near future by the vast majority of the international community, including the five nuclear-weapon States, will mark a major advancement of international law. For that reason, we have devoted considerable effort in recent weeks to encouraging as many States as possible to be cosponsors and/or otherwise support this treaty.

From Canada's perspective, this is only one more step, albeit a critical one, towards the attainment of the larger objectives of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. We will continue to advocate, endorse and participate, as actively and as positively as possible, in further measures to those ends. Our commitment to the Principles and Objectives which emerged from the NPT extension process was not and is not a paper commitment.

In conclusion, and echoing the voices of many others in this Assembly, Canada firmly believes that four decades of aspirations and more than two years of intensive negotiations cannot and will not be thwarted or wasted. We hope, and indeed urge, that the great majority of States represented here will also take such a position and, moreover, soon sign and commit themselves to participating constructively in the preparation and implementation process to follow. Our common commitment to international peace and security demands no less.

The Acting President: I should like to inform the Assembly that the representative of Bangladesh has requested to participate in the debate on this item. Inasmuch as the list of speakers was closed yesterday afternoon at 5 p.m., if there is no objection, this delegation will be included in the list of speakers.

It was so decided.

Mr. Zarif (Islamic Republic of Iran): Have we achieved what we have yearned for through decades: a comprehensive ban? Have we succeeded in freezing the development of nuclear weapons? Have we at long last set the stage for nuclear disarmament? Will this generation or our children be able to open their eyes one day soon to a world that is no longer haunted by the horror of nuclear weapons — a nuclear-weapon-free world?

It has taken 50 years since the first nuclear test in Los Alamos to put an end to these tests. Throughout this time, nuclear-weapon States have conducted more than

2,000 tests for the development and qualitative improvement of their nuclear arsenals.

The President took the Chair.

Throughout these long, horrifying years, the non-aligned have persistently called for the prohibition of testing and the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty (CTBT). The objective has also remained consistent: an end to the development of nuclear weapons in all its aspects as a step towards nuclear disarmament.

During negotiations on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) within the 18-member Disarmament Committee, the non-aligned States demanded an express commitment and a provision in the Treaty for a CTBT, along with some other steps towards nuclear disarmament. In the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the NPT, the indefinite extension of the Treaty would not have come about had the CTBT not been clearly on the horizon. There is therefore no question that the call for the CTBT was initiated by the non-aligned States as a necessary step towards nuclear disarmament and that, throughout years of deliberation, it became an essential part of the non-aligned vision for the future of our world.

It should logically follow that the non-aligned States should be rejoicing today, now that a text of the CTBT is before the General Assembly for adoption. But what we see here, to our most profound regret, is an attitude that can at best be described as sombre. The reason, I believe, is too evident to require any complex conceptual or philosophical debate.

The present CTBT text does not meet nuclear disarmament criteria as originally intended. We had not perceived a CTBT solely as a non-proliferation instrument; the treaty must terminate fully and comprehensively further development of nuclear weapons. However, the current text only bans explosions, thus limiting such development in certain aspects alone, while leaving other avenues wide open.

This is not just a matter of wording. It is a matter of intentions. In Geneva, some nuclear-weapon States were adamant and explicit in stating that this treaty was not aimed at ending the development of nuclear weapons and that such developments should be allowed and would continue with more sophisticated techniques.

We are concerned, therefore, and we have every reason to be concerned.

This treaty cannot be considered in a vacuum. There is no longer any secret that competition has already started in the accumulation and utilization of technology and data collected from nuclear explosions to conduct advanced simulation testing. There is serious and real risk, therefore, that the nuclear arms race will be reignited at a new and probably more dangerous level. This draft treaty can thus be effective essentially in arresting proliferation and containing some nuclear-weapon States. But it fails to freeze further development of nuclear weapons by all States.

It is, on the other hand, a matter of public information that nuclear disarmament continues to remain in oblivion, as commitment is absent for any step beyond a CTBT and possibly a cut off. It has in fact been stated openly and repeatedly by some nuclear-weapon States that no measure towards nuclear disarmament could be envisaged at the international level save existing bilateral nuclear-weapon-reduction arrangements. Any notion of introducing time-frames, even flexible ones, for measures which lead to nuclear disarmament have also been rejected and even ridiculed.

The text, therefore, has major shortcomings in areas that are essential in order to preserve its stated objectives. There are also other problems in the text. In a number of areas, the text fails to meet our expectations and those of the non-aligned countries as a whole. One particular problematic area relates to the question of national technical means. Here, the non-aligned States had insisted during the negotiations that with an elaborate and extensive International Monitoring System, resort to national technical means as a way to trigger inspection was unnecessary and irrelevant. In devising the verification regime, it was always borne in mind that it should be effective, comprehensive and, at the same time, not open to abuse.

Two years of intensive discussions and negotiations with the participation of highly qualified experts from various countries led to the system designed specifically for the treaty, a system which includes more than 300 stations from four monitoring networks to register and detect the principal features of any probable nuclear explosion. The geographical coverage is such that data is collected simultaneously from all parts of the world and transmitted instantaneously to the international data centre.

Despite all this, some nuclear-weapon States that normally consider any international system as unreliable and have strong tendencies towards unilateralism remained intransigent on the position that such an extensive, comprehensive and, indeed, expensive International Monitoring System should be equal in authority to their national technical means. What that meant was that individual States could be enabled to register claims of violations based solely on their own private, non-transparent sources.

In this context, arguments raised on the necessity of detecting sub-critical explosions turned out to be only a pretext. Otherwise, the proponents of the idea should have agreed to limit the validity of national means to those explosions, with the proviso that they would be phased out once the international monitoring system was equipped to detect sub-critical tests. What we saw in the end was that despite opposition from the great majority of States, the position of the one or two unilateralists prevailed.

We consider, however, that the changes at the last stage, which increased the number of votes required to trigger an inspection on the basis of national technical means could reduce the possibility of abuse. We insist, at the same time, that by no means should the text be interpreted as providing equal status or weight to national technical means in comparison to the international system.

There is another problem which is purely political and has nothing to do with the treaty and, as such, was completely avoidable. Israel has, for the last four decades, been consistently considered a part of the group of Western European and other States in all major international organizations. Yet for some mysterious reason, some in the Western group rejected Israel from their group and imposed it instead on the group of Middle Eastern and South Asian States, despite the fact that such inclusion had been opposed throughout the negotiations.

What appears in the text in this regard is an aberration which remains objectionable. Let me assert that those few who intended to score a political point have, by doing so, created an obstacle for the implementation of the treaty, as confrontation in this regional group would make it tremendously difficult for the Executive Council to be formed. The Conference of the States Parties then would eventually be compelled to find a way to redress this problem.

In sum, therefore, this text is grossly tilted towards the position of a few nuclear-weapon States and their allies and severely lacks balance.

I shall now proceed to answer the questions I raised at the beginning. The draft treaty does not meet the expectations of the great majority of the world. It fails to achieve its stated objectives within its intended context. It also falls short of what the mandate had called for. It is a text that is fine-tuned to satisfy the views and positions of a few nuclear-weapon States. There is, therefore, no real cause for celebration.

Most of the States that have eventually agreed to allow the draft treaty to be adopted have done so with hesitation and concern. Many have expressed discontent at the Conference on Disarmament, at the General Assembly and elsewhere. Support is disheartened and dispirited.

For us in the Islamic Republic of Iran this is a difficult decision. We have been among the major proponents of the comprehensive test ban all along. We have spared no effort to promote and to achieve it. We presented a draft compromise text when the positions of various interlocutors were miles apart. That text, incidentally, is still believed by many to present a much more reasonable balance than the one put forward for adoption here today.

The Conference on Disarmament had the ability and the opportunity to bring about consensus, as it had done on various occasions in the past. There was no reason that it could not do the same again, except for a behind-the-scenes decision by a few States to bring the negotiations to a premature, sudden halt. Yet despite the availability of time, no real discussion or consultation took place once the text had been presented, as the few who had managed to inscribe their one-sided positions in the text during the final exclusive round of negotiations threatened the unravelling of the whole text if there were even minimal alterations. Diplomacy gave way to pressure tactics, which deepened dissent and opposition. The CTBT has thus been seriously harmed.

We are therefore left with one choice, a choice between having a flawed treaty or abandoning the treaty altogether: an unwanted choice indeed. In our overall assessment, therefore, and on the basis of our strong desire for the nuclear-test ban, we would go along with the decision here, while reserving our position on the

points we have stressed throughout the negotiations and reiterated here today.

We shall also continue to pursue these positions both within the context of the CTBT and in the Conference on Disarmament and other relevant forums. We shall redouble our efforts in collaboration with other non-aligned States to push for a programme for nuclear disarmament within agreed time-frames. In fact, the move has already been initiated through the proposal of the 28 non-aligned States at the Conference on Disarmament.

It is also our expectation that other non-nuclear-weapon States will join hands with us in impressing upon nuclear-weapon States that lukewarm claims of commitment to nuclear disarmament can no longer be accepted. The CTBT, with all its shortcomings, should accelerate the process of nuclear disarmament through negotiations on a consecutive series of subsequent treaties. We shall not rest until our planet is free from the scourge of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Kunda (Zambia): To begin with, I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important resumed fiftieth session of the General Assembly to consider agenda item 65 in pursuance of resolution 50/65 of 12 December 1995.

I also want to salute the member States of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva for having negotiated the comprehensive test-ban treaty (CTBT), a draft text of which we are here to adopt. They engaged in intense negotiations and showed perseverance and commitment to the cause of nuclear disarmament. They came up with a draft text which is essentially a compromise document.

The international community in general, and the General Assembly in particular, have consistently made clarion calls for the establishment of a comprehensive test-ban treaty for over three decades. Those clarion calls have now been answered by the draft CTBT text before this Assembly and awaiting final adoption.

This treaty is obviously an imperfect one. It has not addressed all the legitimate concerns of non-nuclear States. Zambia would, for instance, have preferred the treaty to have been linked to the elimination of nuclear weapons in a time-bound framework. However, imperfect as the Treaty is, we believe that it is an important step on the road to nuclear disarmament. It will contribute to the efforts to diminish the role of nuclear weapons in international security considerations. For these reasons and other considerations, Zambia will lend its support to the draft resolution contained in document A/50/L.78 and the draft treaty text contained in document A/50/1027.

We must, however, bear in mind that the CTBT is not an end in itself. It should only spur us all to greater heights in our relentless quest for a world free of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery. The world is not yet free from nuclear weapons. It is therefore now incumbent upon nuclear-weapon States to accelerate their efforts aimed at the total eradication from the face of the Earth of all nuclear weapons and their systems of delivery. We all know only too well that these are, after all, not weapons of war — they are weapons of mass destruction. Their continued existence will always keep mankind and human civilization on the brink of extinction if a nuclear conflagration were to occur, whether on purpose or by accident or miscalculation.

It is also my country's considered view that the non-proliferation regime, which promises to be greatly strengthened by the CTBT, would be further bolstered by a fissionable-material-production cut-off treaty. The Conference on Disarmament in Geneva should therefore spare no effort in initiating intensive negotiations on a fissionable-material cut-off treaty.

Mr. Jayanama (Thailand): Ever since the explosion of the first atomic bomb, mankind has waited for the day that this dreadful weapon of mass destruction would be eliminated forever from this Earth. More than 50 years after that first explosion, we are still waiting.

Today, my delegation is joining with many other members of this Assembly to bring the world one step closer to that goal. The draft resolution, of which my delegation is a cosponsor and which it wishes to vote in favour of today, would give formal recognition to a historic document: a treaty that will ban all nuclear-weapon-test explosions under all circumstances.

Certainly, the treaty, in its current state, is long overdue and far from perfect. However, in spite of its imperfections, the treaty promises us all a brighter future. At the least, we and our children will no longer have to live in the fear of nuclear fallout from neighbouring countries and regions, fallout which could contaminate our land and environment for generations. It is hoped that, once operational, the treaty will also help obstruct any qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and their components in the possession of the many nuclear

aspirants. It will help impede, if not put a stop to the senseless race towards nuclear superiority, particularly at the regional level.

It is truly unfortunate that, today, we have to lend our approval to this treaty in an unprecedented and unorthodox manner. In doing so, my delegation would like to emphasize that Thailand's cosponsorship of and support for the draft resolution that we have before us does not in anyway negate the high importance that Thailand attaches to the competence and work of the Conference on Disarmament as the principal forum for multilateral disarmament negotiations. In fact, it is precisely because of our recognition of and appreciation for the Conference's hard work and exceptional efforts in negotiating and drawing up this treaty that we decided to join other delegations in supporting the draft resolution. We were saddened that consensus could not be reached on the draft treaty and we cannot remain indifferent to the notion that, after more than two years of intense negotiations and in spite of the almost universal acceptance of the draft treaty, the comprehensive test-ban treaty (CTBT) would be left to languish in the archives of the Conference on Disarmament.

By the same token, I should like to emphasize that Thailand's support for the treaty, with its deficiencies and loopholes, is by no means a final objective. As mentioned earlier, my delegation believes that the CTBT is simply a single step forward. Thailand will remain steadfastly committed to the goals of general and complete disarmament, especially of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. More importantly, Thailand will continue to work towards the elimination of all nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework and to cooperate with all delegations and institutions to realize this goal.

The international community has been dreaming of a nuclear-free world for far too long. Now that we are about to move a step closer to our dream through the adoption of the CTBT, let us try our utmost to ensure that this treaty becomes truly effective both in law and in spirit.

Mr. Ayewah (Nigeria): Today, we take a very important step in the continuing effort to promote international peace and security, in line with our obligations under the United Nations Charter. We are being called upon to consider a text of a comprehensive test-ban treaty (CTBT), which represents a significant movement from the import and intent of the 1963 Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water.

We acknowledge the monumental effort that has been made by the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate such a text. Imperfect as it is, we are delighted to note that a major effort has been made to produce a text of a CTBT with demonstrable objectives within a target date, as enjoined by the General Assembly at its fiftieth session.

It is my delegation's hope, therefore, that on all other questions before the United Nations we will endeavour to be guided by such admirable concern for meeting deadlines and target dates.

We note that a draft resolution is currently before the Assembly and that it has been sponsored by a sizeable number of States. The Nigerian delegation welcomes this enthusiasm, but cannot but place on record that it finds itself uncomfortable with the procedure by which this draft resolution has been brought to the General Assembly. We must seek to maintain the dignity and authority of the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral negotiating body on disarmament and respect its pre-eminent rule of consensus. It would of course be a hard sell to explain to people that we failed to adopt a CTBT when there was one available to adopt, and particularly against the backdrop of international expectations geared to this possible eventuality.

It would have been preferable to spend more time in negotiating the treaty so as to tie up the loose ends, reach accommodation on matters of principle and substance and make the treaty more comprehensive both in intent and scope, and thus enable it to enjoy consensus. In that way, full implementation of the treaty by all States would be assured.

We have drawn attention to the awkwardness of a situation in which a procedure is micro-managed in order to achieve a predetermined outcome. We witnessed this type of micro-management during the extension process of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, as a result of which the possession of nuclear weapons is now vested in perpetuity in the hands of the five nuclear-weapon States.

That situation negates the principle of equality of access to nuclear technology for development and even the principle of the sovereign equality of States.

Be that as it may, my Government has agreed to support the adoption of the present text of the CTBT not for what it does not say, but for what it has tried to say and provide for, and more importantly as a complement

to the Partial Test-Ban Treaty of 1963. We continue to believe that the CTBT must not be conceived solely as a nuclear non-proliferation measure, but as an important step towards the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons.

On the basis of the foregoing, there is a clear moral responsibility on the part of the nuclear-weapon States in particular to conduct themselves responsibly and refrain from any action that may tend to undermine international peace and security by their continued possession of nuclear weapons. They must accept the option of nuclear disarmament within a time-bound framework, which is the next logical undertaking by the Conference on Disarmament after the adoption of a CTBT by this Assembly.

Mr. Guillén (Peru) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Peru has adhered to a long-standing and consistent policy aimed at banning nuclear tests and at contributing to the achievement of complete nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation in all its aspects. We endorsed the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which established the first nuclear-weapon-free zone. That international instrument is now complemented by various treaties on nuclear-weapon-free zones on other continents.

The series of resolutions adopted by consensus by the General Assembly — in particular resolution 50/65, which all countries represented here adopted last year — have voiced great expectations for the early finalization and adoption of the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, which was negotiated intensively in the Conference on Disarmament. We appreciate the intense effort made in that body, which led to a draft treaty whose adoption we cannot indefinitely postpone. We regret that there was no consensus on its formal presentation to the General Assembly. However, we cannot overlook the importance of this draft and the conviction that it is a major step in a process whose importance we cannot deny.

Of course, we share the dissatisfaction expressed here in the General Assembly as well as in Geneva over the disengagement from a genuine programme of nuclear disarmament — the true goal of instruments such as the Non-Proliferation Treaty and this draft, which we consider stages in that process — and over the blatant change of emphasis from banning nuclear tests to banning nuclear explosions, as well as that expressed in other positions placed on record by the Peruvian delegation in paragraph 33 of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee and in the Conference on Disarmament, which I should like here to reiterate. We believe that the draft resolution before us should in no way not set a precedent that could diminish the role of the Conference on Disarmament as the main negotiating forum for disarmament matters.

The consensus on resolution 50/65 confers a special character on draft resolution A/50/L.78 and also gives integrity to the unwavering support that my delegation will provide for it.

Mr. Izquierdo (Ecuador) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The General Assembly called on the Conference on Disarmament, in particular the nuclear-weapon States, to conclude, as a task of the highest priority, a universal and multilaterally and effectively verifiable comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty that would contribute to nuclear disarmament and the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects, so that it would be opened for signature by the outset of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly.

Ecuador, in co-sponsoring draft resolution A/50/L.78, is heeding the appeal made by the international community that a fundamental step be taken to put an end to this universal threat and responding to the urgency of establishing the mechanisms needed to protect humankind from that threat.

We should act not tomorrow but today, while there may still be time, before other countries join the group of Powers that have the capability to trigger the detonators of a universal holocaust. Mankind can no longer be a mere spectator to the demonstration of power by the few, nor can it halt its development because of the will of a minority. Ecuador obviously attaches the highest priority to this matter and calls on the Members of the United Nations to adopt today, in keeping with the mandate of resolution 50/65, the text of the comprehensive test-ban treaty so that it can be opened for signature in order to put an immediate end to an age of terror during which more than 2,000 test explosions have taken place, the human health and environmental consequences of which have not yet been fully established.

This is therefore a historic moment in the efforts made over many years to advance disarmament and strengthen international peace and security.

Mr. Londoño-Paredes (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My country is a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Tlatelolco Treaty and the Antarctic Treaty. It has for many years

been committed to the disarmament cause, and for this reason we attach great importance to the signing of the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty (CTBT).

My delegation co-sponsored the draft resolution under consideration today in the conviction that the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty constitutes a significant step forward for non-proliferation within the framework of the disarmament process, even though the text of the treaty is far from satisfactory, as it does not fully address the concerns that have characterized the struggle of developing countries to combat the threat of nuclear weapons.

My delegation considers the treaty to be an initial, though major, step forward. As it is inconceivable to have a world in which only a certain group of countries has the right to possess nuclear weapons indefinitely, and since we are able to conceive of the possibility of a world free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, we invite the nuclear-weapon States to take further action and begin firm negotiations with a view to the elimination of nuclear weapons within a specific time-frame. In this regard we subscribe completely to the views expressed by the Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement at Cartagena in October 1995, when they reaffirmed that for the comprehensive test-ban treaty to be meaningful in the context of a disarmament treaty it must be considered an important step towards the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specific time-frame.

On 8 July 1996 the International Court of Justice issued a unanimous Advisory Opinion dealing with the threat or use of nuclear weapons, stating that there existed an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. We look forward to action consistent with that International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion.

The court also highlighted the great importance of article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which states:

> "Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control."

In conclusion, while we regret that the Conference on Disarmament was not able to reach the desired consensus on the text of the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, we believe that the exceptional circumstances in which we are considering this text today should not constitute a precedent or affect the decision-making procedures of the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. Ziauddin (Bangladesh): It is a fundamental principle of Bangladesh's policy to seek general and complete disarmament, a commitment that has been reflected in our adherence to the major international treaties and conventions relating to disarmament. We are therefore trying to play an active and constructive role at the 61-member Conference on Disarmament, to which Bangladesh was admitted on 17 June 1996.

The comprehensive test-ban treaty (CTBT) has long been a demand of the Non-Aligned Movement. In fact, the first Non-Aligned Movement Summit in Belgrade in 1961 also demanded a CTBT. Two years later a partial test-ban Treaty was concluded, and since then the Non-Aligned Movement has been pressing for a CTBT.

Obviously, a CTBT cannot be an end in itself. It is, however, an important step towards preventing the further development and refinement of nuclear weaponry and towards the ultimate goal of nuclear disarmament. According to many experts it is also an important environmental-protection measure in line with the partial test-ban Treaty.

The road towards nuclear disarmament may be long and even tortuous, and the process can move forward only step by step. Bangladesh is a non-weapon State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and as such our commitment to nuclear non-proliferation goes far beyond the provisions of the CTBT. Our position is that we welcome the conclusion of a zero-yield, internationally verifiable, universal CTBT. We see the CTBT as a stepping-stone towards the ultimate objective of nuclear disarmament.

We expect nuclear-capable States not to resort to non-explosive techniques, including laser ignition, computer simulation or hydro-nuclear and laboratory testing to further refine their nuclear arsenals. This would be a clear breach of faith with the vast number of NPT signatories. The ideal situation would be for the nuclear-weapon States to agree, simultaneously with the CTBT, on a time-bound framework for nuclear disarmament. That ideal, however, should not be an obstacle to what is

achievable now. It should, of course, encourage us to persist in our efforts.

A major consideration for Bangladesh with regard to the CTBT is the financial obligation that will devolve on the States parties as a result of the preparatory committee, the technical secretariat and the International Monitoring System. Bangladesh, as a least-developed country, would have to base its decision to a large extent on the budgetary implications, especially if it would mean paying for a CTBT that merely reaffirms part of a broader commitment already made in the context of the NPT.

In conclusion, I would like to state that Bangladesh is in the meantime pleased to extend its support to draft resolution A/50/L.78 on the CTBT, which is before us today.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item for this meeting. We shall meet at 3 this afternoon in Conference Room 3, to take action on draft resolution A/50/L.78.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.